

Encountering the Wild Dog Pups

How old is the habit of denial? We keep secrets from ourselves that all along we know.... For perhaps we are like stones; our own history and the history of the world embedded in us, we hold a sorrow deep within and cannot weep until that history is sung.

Susan Griffin, *Chorus of Stones*, pp. 48

Going to the South African bush constitutes a varied and many-layered adventure and is the inspiration for this paper. This particular morning an event occurred at a game reserve near the Botswana border. It began with a special call--the reported sighting of wild dog pups. Not knowing what this meant and in fact not even able to image what wild dogs were, it was obvious this was a unique phenomenon and the excitement of the guide was infectious. Even though none of us had ever seen wild dogs, we rapidly ensconced ourselves in the warm clothes needed to brave the biting early morning cold and piled into the land rover, heading out on the bumpy road.

In this paper I attempt to juxtapose this experience in the South African bush with the analytic process. In both, participants encounter the unexpected, the losses and gains, and the basic instincts as essential for

psychological exploration. This all happens within and outside linear time, and the various languages and backgrounds that make up the transference and counter transference, all leading beyond what is initially imagined.

Years ago a man, then in his mid-thirties, divorced with three teenage children living with their mother, walked into the office. Over many sessions we roamed the landscape of the psyche—delving into his disturbed relation to his body and its natural instincts; his experiences of the distortion of spirit into the dogma of religion; discovering his attachment to nature; and the development of his sense of self out combined with understanding what he called the blown apart place. The demand raised by the unconscious brought an unexpected move from attempts at conformity with the collective to gaining comfort with his individual self.

Jung comments that, “psychic processes are balances of energy flowing between spirit and instinct, though the question of whether a process is to be described as spiritual or as instinctual remains shrouded in darkness. Such evaluation or interpretation depends entirely upon the standpoint or state of the conscious mind.”[1969, par. 407.] He contends it is the instinct upon which wholeness of the personality depends. Said another way, having alignment with the instincts is a key piece for transformation and individual self-expression.

When we arrived at the location of the wild dog sighting, about an hour's drive from where we were staying, we parked and waited. And we waited and waited. From 7am to dark in the South African bush we were sedentary in the land rover, breathing in the velvety air, feeling the warmth of the sun and the intensity of the blue sky as the dawn turned eventually into dusk. An extraordinary feeling of harmony and yet absolute strangeness and danger was implicit and magnetically filled the atmosphere. Hardly knowing what was occurring, it was like being conscious and unconscious at the same time. The whole experience was so out of the 'civilized' world. In something like this, you know it is amazing but nothing prepares you, nor should it. You sense things moving that you cannot see. Even, you wonder if you should be there, as interfering tourists are kept to a minimum due to how we humans destroy the land and animal environment.

Sitting still an entire day opens the psyche. All senses are on alert in the midst of what cannot be fully understood because the bush, like many places physically and psychologically, remains basically unknown. This day was significant in noticing the micro-moments, timeless, charged with emotion. Through the magic of these moments in nature a peculiar alteration of consciousness occurs with its impact on somatic and psychological experience. "By returning to the mystery of the animal...we come closer to

our natural origins. Through the animal we can regain connection to the intersecting web of life as it manifests in all things.” [Hinton, 1993, p. 50]

From an immersion like this, one learns something about bush time, patience and being rather than doing. One gains a perspective on animal time and what it means to merely exist, suspended and uncertain. The day in the bush transfixes and transforms. Reflection, looking with a less directed perspective, the paradoxical enticement of nature and the risk it takes to be open to whatever happens—or does not. Laurens van der Post explains this by saying, “I had no doubt then that by opening our imagination to the beauty and diversity of life and proportion of all the kinds of things that surrounded me in nature in Africa, nature would unlock a way towards a form of wholeness which we are compelled to find within ourselves if we are not to perish.” [Meier, 1985, p. 129]

Jung [CW 8, par. 407] puts it another way commenting that, “psychic processes are balances of energy flowing between spirit and instinct, though the question of whether a process is to be described as spiritual or as instinctual remains shrouded in darkness.” Time and space lose their boundaries and have altered meanings when we are in nature. As we sat there the deafening sound of silence took over. We had to take on being something like the wild animals. If we had to talk we did so in whispers

without anyone advising that this was the protocol. The subtlety and complexity of this experience meant developing an ear for what was happening to body and psyche.

The rules are strict. One cannot just go to the bathroom in the bush—too many animals to which we people are food. No way to walk around or leave the containment of the land rover. Sitting there, naked without the usual city covering, opened us to what seemed touched by the numinous. In such situations, and seemingly without choice, we are forced to adapt and find parts of ourselves previously unknown. As Jung said, "...the main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neuroses, but rather with the approach to the numinous. But the fact is that the approach to the numinous is the real therapy and inasmuch as you attain to the numinous experiences, you are released from the curse of pathology. Even the very disease takes on a numinous character. [Letter to P.W. Martin, 20 Aug-ust 1945 - Letters II p. 376]

Rudolf Otto [1923] uses the word numinous to describe personal experiences of spiritual power. He refers to the ancient Latin, *numen*, usually translated as "the presence of a god or goddess," or more precisely, "the power or nod of a deity." For Otto, numinosity originates from outside the self and is perceived within. Jung adds to this by equating the experience

of the numinous with that of the archetype. It is not just a random or superficial event but, as with the phenomenon of synchronicity, there is an understanding that the experience carries particular and personal meaning.

In a letter dated August 20, 1949, Jung says it is the numen which offers "the real therapy, and inasmuch as you attain to the numinous experiences you are released from the curse of pathology." [1973] In another instance Jung refers to the numen as "a dynamic agency or effect not caused by an arbitrary act of will. On the contrary, it seizes and controls the human subject....The numinosum - whatever its cause may be - is an experience of the subject independent of his will....The numinosum is the influence of an invisible presence that causes a peculiar alteration of consciousness." (Jung, 1989, par. 6)

In the wilderness there is no way of knowing beforehand, like metaphorically sitting in the psyche where one is vulnerable to the inner wilderness with its many forms. This is a place evocative, instinctive and informs one's spirit of the infinitely diversified and rich symbolism in the unknown possibilities. The ability to tolerate the frustration of not-knowing, to face emptiness without trying to fill it or idealizing it as a way of denying feeling, dependence, or desire, alters the quality of our interactions with the world.

Jung says, [1963, par. 190] “If you contemplate your lack of fantasy, of inspiration and inner aliveness, which you feel as sheer stagnation and a barren wilderness, and impregnate it with the interest born of alarm at your inner death, then something can take shape in you, for your inner emptiness conceals just as great a fullness if only you will allow it to penetrate into you. If you prove receptive to this ‘call of the wild,’ the longing for fulfillment will quicken the sterile wilderness of your soul as rain quickens the dry earth.”

The point of the day proved not to be seeing the pups but the moments deferring to the animal world and its time frame. In fact, it was quite rare to see the pups of this species because they were almost extinct. So, instead, we found ourselves enclosed in a nature/spirit time and place frame wherein exist the sacred in the elemental. This is like the analytic space with its time as *kairos*, circular rather than linear, timeless, and where the spirits of the land enter one’s being. For this day we were part of the wilderness and a whole new world became discernable. Upon reflection, the South African bush is comparable with how the psyche is explored in a physical language, without words, and requires being acutely present. Jung says, “the soil of every country holds a unique mystery with an unconscious reflection of this

in the psyche. As there is a relationship between mind to body, so there is a relationship of body to earth.” [1970, par. 19]

Animals

If we look at the wild dog symbolically, as an aspect of the psyche, it propels us out of the ego world. Dogs in Celtic society were symbolic of both healing and death. Jung discusses the dog in the context of alchemy and as the dark side of the Moon. Hecate, Diana and Persephone's animals were dogs. And as was evident that day, just like the symbol can never be fully interpreted, it can be only partly experienced. This holds true for all images of the animal kingdom whether they approach us through dreams, myths, fairy tales or active imagination. These images represent a change in consciousness, a shift in attitude that can be transformative. They reflect collective problems as well as personal, and are especially needed when the head is developed over the heart, culture over nature, the alienation and fragmentation of our technical world and the pressures of the disjointed ways we live.

Animals remind us of an innate knowing that we have forgotten, a way of being human that we have lost. Often we defensively cling to the preconceived notions that we are different from animals. In this way, we make an artificial border, a division that supports a divided self. Such

reactions narrow into internal disconnections. We forget that being in nature can shake us into experiencing and being involved rather than remaining the observer or driven by anxiety. [Hillman, 1993, p. 23] In fact, our lives depend on us gaining a correct relationship to nature, inside and out. “Wilderness is an instrument for enabling us to recover our lost capacity for religious experience. Through wilderness we remember, and are brought home again.” [Meier, 1985, p. 48] The wilderness of us all is just waiting to be recognized. “In order to live our future we have to remember the needs of our instinctive, intuitive natural self.” [Meier, 1985, P. 56]

The unconscious becomes activated by intent, fear, hope, or any strong emotion, and this activation is accompanied by a lowering of consciousness that also brings a relativization of space and time. This can be likened to the analytic process where the nuances and the small shifts are noted as each participant registers similar and dissimilar reactions. The language of words as well as the senses and body feelings are ways we share, speak to, and speak from the range and depth of our human experiences that are revealed in the analytic setting.

We further the course of individuation through bringing our animal nature to the fore consciously. To realize our communications with all of creation represents the effort to meet, to be equal to, to do justice to, the

fullness and complexity of our relationship to the nature experience. Its significance derives from a set of internal and external circumstances coming together synchronistically so the experience is integrally connected with other aspects of life and other feeling states.

Time

Within the framework of the analytic setting the timelessness of the unconscious becomes very apparent. Central to the functioning of the human psyche, and therefore to the analytic process, is the subjective remembrance of time, the articulating and ordering of mental elements in the act of symbolizing and the verbal linking of the inchoate. Analysis requires spending time in the timelessness of the psyche while the paradox remains that time is nothing to the soul. It is through this process that we attempt to master trauma of all kinds: internal and external, acute and cumulative. And, we are susceptible to over value linear time which signals alienation from nature.

Time is a real dimension of the physical universe and equally a subjective matter of the mind and memory. We may both fear and hate time as the harbinger of limits and mortality, while simultaneously depending upon it for life. Without awareness of time, we could be lured to remain in the status quo. On the other hand, timelessness may be the illusion with

which we assuage the pains of life's limits, our conflicts about and capacities to acknowledge and bear the losses, hurts and disappointments as well as the hopes and possibilities that life can hold.

Animals help guide us through life passages and facilitate our moving from one phase to the next thanks to their capacity to remind us about the instincts. Fear, anxiety, compulsions, addictions reflect inner division and such reactions indicate disconnection with our animal spirits. Those who have a living relationship with animals and nature can use them in a symbolic and healing way. In our technological world, when animals show up in our lives they can herald a change, or give us a nudge to wake up emotionally, or bring us a sense of security and trust. Animals can inspire spontaneity and remind us to value our physical existence.

This type of instinctual knowing is useful on many levels, especially when there has been impaired parental care. A person internalizes objects that may be dead and then becomes dead and numbed, suffering an unrequited emptiness and lack of healthy self-identify. When this happens, one registers only anxiety and is subsumed with destructive or obsessive drives and persecutory impulses. These psychological holes create a residue of being unable to love or make the most of one's talents. [Green, 2001, p. 176]

The Analysis

The guide told us that wild dogs are known to be extremely protective of their pups. Both males and females look out for and express concern for their young. The wild dog's Latin name means painted wolf and it is characteristic of the species that no wild dogs have the same pattern of coat. The entire social system is cooperative-dependent and the puppies are dependent on their parents for such a long period of time that cooperation and care is a necessary given. So, instead of an active hierarchy, they have a passive hierarchy, with submission to each other emphasized rather than dominance.

A most striking aspect of wild dog society is the amity that exists between members. This is illustrated through their intense greeting ceremony. When two wild dogs meet, they display submission to one another, muzzle licking, whining, and even regurgitating food to the other and will not fight over food. Even when the whole pack is crowded around a kill there is little overt strife. The social arrangement is extraordinary because it is the opposite of most other social mammals such as lions and elephants.

In contrast to this clannish warmth I think about the analysis with Jeff, who finds the timing between us off, understanding incomplete and that little

connection or comfort occurs. He had no emotional care in the clan of his birth, no way for him to be cared for and loved. Almost no pictures were taken of him when he was a child and few verbal snapshots were conveyed about him. Mostly it was hiding and being alone so much that to this day Jeff has difficulty receiving attention or being physically touched. As he grew, Jeff strictly followed the religious rules until he left the church in his late twenties. Looking back, he felt his soul was disconnected, the church empty and without relation to his essence.

Unlike the wild dog culture, he received no hugs, no touch, no eros and little personal engagement. There was little love between parents who put up a façade for years until it came out that his father was homosexual which was disallowed by the religion. The mother's emotional distance and the father's deceptiveness in his sexuality and also illicit work ethics created a foundation of distrust and insecurity in both body and psyche for Jeff. This sorely affected his relation to self and others.

Jeff lived in contrast to the wild dogs, which know about attachment, love, protection, vulnerability and dependence and comfort with each other. Jeff longs to be in a relationship but the link between inner and outer has felt too disparate lacking the bridge of connection. The fear and distrust of his physical-sensual nature plus regarding himself as flawed, resulted in

isolation, alienation and internal splitting. “What to the rational mind seems a flaw is often a profoundly mysterious key to the secret of individual life...When we pathologize human foibles in our relentless way, trying to subdue and ‘purify’ life, we kill the soul.” [Hinton, 1993, p. 58] For example, Jeff was deeply ashamed of his body and often embarrassed about his looks. Alienation from the body contributed to overriding self-doubt and feeling small.

Human infants need to develop secure attachments for developing trust and love. When this is not the case protest, despair and detachment become the standard response. Jeff’s childhood did not support his instinctual, emotional and physical foundations, and his religion was narrow and rule oriented leaving an unfulfilled longing for connection. For years Jeff just was angry, unable to bridge the pervasive feelings of discomfort within him and with others. In order to survive Jeff hardened against the inner and outer environment. The effect was that his interior landscape remained hidden and vulnerable, and the outer world a place that mirrored how much he felt off.

An example of his family distance and disconnection is a story Jeff told that when a teenager he got a knife stuck in his foot at dinner. No one in his family noticed as he carefully walked out of the room with the knife

sticking out and his foot bleeding. He remembered trying to walk normally to avoid the attention he knew would be the wrong kind and that he did not want.

For years Jeff was unable to comprehend what he called the lack of fit and pervasive feelings of discomfort within himself and with others. Jeff can handle much physical distress, working long hours, hiking in what could be dangerous territory, not mattering if anyone knows where he is or not. His self becomes restored in the absolute desolation of nature, the barren land, a lack of civilization where for days on end he encounters no one.

Self-regulating processes within the psyche are activated in attempts to correct the psychological imbalance. However, Jeff could feel so little that what happened between us, the transference and the counter transference were based on rules he made up about how interactions should be. This reaction had developed so he could survive, as his instincts about people were so blunted.

Sometimes after or during a session I could feel hopeless or empty, unable to reach him. This might be what Jeff also experiences. If I have become part of his inner world, referred to by Andrew Samuels as 'embodied counter transference' [2000, p. 411], I am also experiencing the themes active in Jeff's psyche. I can feel his frustration and struggle and am

mindful to use what happens between us as that is the area he often denies because he just does not feel it.

One of the first dreams Jeff brought portrayed him taken from a city signifying the roots of his religion in a procession of many people. He was being carried because his legs were frozen beer bottles and not yet thawed. As they were taking him south towards where he actually lives, his legs were going to thaw. We periodically returned to this dream as it unraveled many meanings. The city in the dream he associated with the law of the church and his father, the origins of his life, and his mother's emotional attachment and intimacy to the church more than to the family. Beer was forbidden in his religion, but he drank it now, and the beer legs represented the phallic and sexual standpoint that was frozen in that world submerged under rules and rigid ideas. Truly this is how he had been in life—carried along while his natural impulses were compromised due to the unrelatedness of his mother, father and the church and his internalization of all their rules that were deadening to him.

The conflicts between the inner and the outer, spirit and nature, body and psyche required linking the unconscious structures of Jeff's life. The analysis was a methodical unpeeling and reconstructing of himself that he described as lancing an abscess, the painful uncovering of disappointments,

obscurities, mysteries, and tears. It involved session after session to experience the sensitive nuances of feelings, perceptions, thoughts, ideas, and emotions that had never been addressed or acknowledged. We explored together the psychic landscape--where he was slow or delayed, things that were subtle or uneasily perceived—and interpreted the interpersonal spaces, thereby making room for patterns and themes to emerge.

This is similar to what happened while waiting for the wild dog pups to appear in that the goal altered into an unfolding. In the process one is immersed in the wilds, drawn by the unconscious currents and faced with the split off instincts. This penetrating looking within was a movement of space and time, a slow but sure rhythm of nature like the movement of the psyche. The apparent need to be disengaged and alone for Jeff to find his self is paradoxically mixed with the fact he felt so disengaged. Jeff was used to self-denial due to the overlay of anxiety, lack of self-care or sufficient experiences of resonant mirroring.

Jeff described his origins devoid of love as he reiterated his mother's rather cruel abhorrence of the natural man according to religious scripture. This translated into his perception that a beautiful woman would turn from him as he was flawed, unacceptable and even hurtful to others. Even when alone, he felt uneasy. He thought he should aspire to reduce the longing for

love to the level zero. He felt unlovable and feared this would be apparent to others if he got close because he was too needy and unsure about accepting or giving love. Sadly, the feeling of being so flawed and unacceptable and even hurtful to another was pervasive, keeping him ensconced in isolation. Jeff experienced dissociation between body and soul, from ideas of what he should not be yet was. All this left him immersed in helplessness and impotence, flattened and with few sparks of hope. For a long time he did not see that this conundrum also contained his natural self.

One of the purposes of analytic inquiry is to heal the splits that characterize the personal and collective conscious and unconscious, and that also carry a spiritual imperative. Living as part of the whole starts from the reality that we are already participants, part of the cosmos, always in relation with each other in an interconnected whole. The moral and practical issue for all humans is to learn to live in a way that does justice to this participation. For Jeff, his journeys into nature were no doubt something like this participation. He gains some sense of self while hiking, facing the elements and living outside linear time. However, even there he remains hounded by doubt and uncertainty if he is being true to himself and by the longing to be with someone.

Through our searching for the restoration of his soul, Jeff, who reported few dreams, had a recurring one come to the surface. In the dream a man chased him over, around and through buildings. The dream took place in a cityscape—crowded, impersonal, chaotic, and concrete and without the resonance when in nature. Throughout the dream he hid and dodged and knew that although he escaped this time, the man might eventually get him. We discussed the dream man as an aspect of himself, a shadow part of his being that he could not turn around to face. At the moment he could only run away.

What can we understand of this dream? Who is the dream-other? The conflicting emotions in wanting to know the man and also to escape may be the kind of information that, brought to consciousness, could help Jeff open his horizons. The unknown man chasing him may represent fear of the other within and without, his inability to trust, and apprehension about the conflictual qualities the masculine represented to him. Perhaps any and all of these are chasing him as well as the rules he perceives that are imposed by the culture, society, family, the dogma of religion and his self. In trying to establish something separate from all these he has to deal with them rather than run. And, the dream pictures what happens in the analysis between us.

We each may be the pursuer and the pursued--dodging, chasing, apprehensive and not connected.

The dream image also revealed much that was present in Jeff's psyche—his strength of body, an ability to perceive and avoid the danger and to steel him from showing or even feeling pain and panic. It also illustrated there was no thought of reaching out, no cry for help, no one in the dream to assist him. Jeff did not expect help, as he assumed no one would understand, much less care. In this dream image we have a sense of what is both absent and present, the psyche struggling to be heard and seen and yet feared and hidden. It is a risk for Jeff to be who he is, exposed, human, vulnerable—all very difficult for someone experiencing such profound early emotional neglect that the need for the other is almost totally denied yet longed for.

The emotional and physical losses and subsequent grief suffered from the beginning affect the imaginary realm and the symbolic entry so early that the child cannot even name what it has lost nor what it mourns. For Jeff, the parental presence and experience of being seen or having resonance with others never happened. The emotional landscape seemed almost completely barren and his story so devoid of the interpersonal that he experienced the world as having nothing to offer.

We could say that Jeff was engaged in a struggle of ambiguity and uncertainty. By negating and rejecting parts of himself, he feels indistinct and the ensuing sense of strangeness is like depersonalization. Julia Kristeva, a French feminist psychoanalyst, speaks about the notion of the "stranger" -the foreigner, outsider, or person who feels alien in a society not their own- -as well as the notion of strangeness within the self, or a person's deep sense of being. She suggests [1994, p. 3] that we touch this otherness, escape its hatred and burden though accepting the differences it implies. She refers to the notion of the alienation, or "splitting off," of the self that comes about as the result of the repression of feelings. Kristeva comments [1994, p. 267] that the secret and unknown wound can drive one to wander.

Jeff felt a stranger to his parents, experiencing a mother's numbed emotional reactions and a father's distancing, intellectualizing, inaccessibility and without expressions of love. He also described feeling like a stranger with others and in the analysis, as he could not feel understood nor connect. Jeff unconsciously seeks an emotional landscape that has not existed previously for him. This is the promise that we begin life with emotional connection but for Jeff its lack continued as a profound longing. He exposes vulnerability beneath the layers of armor, shown by the tears he sheds often in analysis even though they embarrass him. The

perpetual sadness points to a self—wounded, incomplete, empty, feeling afflicted with a fundamental flaw and unacceptable to others. The sadness represents an archaic expression of an unsymbolizable, unnameable narcissistic wound, a profound loss and mourning. Sadness became the emotional object of his attachment due to lack of attachment to a person.

Jeff keeps a shield against the pain of not belonging by not feeling. His experience of beginning in the initial paradise never happened becoming what Kristeva [1992, p. 271] calls a lost mirage of the past, leaving him a dreamer making love with absence and what is missing, therefore becoming depressed and experiencing hatred. Kristeva [ibid. p.12-13] describes this as melancholia and noncommunicable grief about the sadness, aloneness and offness with others—very similar to the words Jeff uses.

Jeff thought his longing for a woman was based on the belief that she would make him whole but he had never questioned what this belief meant or where it came from. For a long time he viewed the absence of a woman in his life as external and not an internal representation of the loss of connection with parts of his self. In the longing to find a woman he was also trying to replenish his soul that lacked the basics of human and maternal connection.

Jeff called this the blown apart place where he could not think, feel or find his orientation. This psychological place, he assumed, was not known to others, an abyss separating him from them. For him, the world seems made up of edges and shameful spaces and relationships are false. To expose what he feels as the tattered shards of his self to others feels like he will be endangering the safety of their world. At times he sounded terrified when describing the need to be alone, crying or wildly eating ice cream or cookies because devoid of an inner compass.

For a long time Jeff seemed unable or resistant to get in touch with the psychic reality of these interior places distinguished by their lack of structure or organization. [Green, 1997, p. 37] Andre Green [ibid., p. 42] interprets this situation as a person needing the container of the analyst for the content to be presented. According to Green, [ibid., p. 42] both analyst and analysand witness how the bad object keeps being resurrected and both face the emptiness that keeps returning as layer after layer of the emotional neglect becomes unwrapped. For Jeff, the apparent need to be disengaged and alone to find his self is paradoxically mixed with the fact he was not engaged with enough of his self.

Franz Kafka, a writer Jeff read and liked, wrote to his fiance, “that utmost of self-revelation and surrender in which a human being, when

involved with others, would feel he was losing himself, and from which, therefore, he will always shrink...” [Letters to Felice ed., erich heller and jurgen born, London, 1974, p. 155-156] These words refer to the painful experiences of letting anyone see or criticize the self that Kafka’s writing revealed. Kafka’s anxiety was such that the actual proximity of another undermined the organization of his psyche. This was not the same but similar to Jeff’s blown apart place.

Because for Jeff there was no parental holding, it has been hard for him to learn self-holding or accept holding from others. Jeff disdained and denied his body instincts, was ridden with negative body feelings and was dismayed and ashamed about his natural sexuality. [Modell, 1996, p. 76] The self-detestation is repeated physically as Jeff mentally shuns his body, imagining in his mind that others see him bike riding and disparagingly comment how someone with his body can bike ride—as if he does not look good enough. Many body desires and love instincts were shut off and he sought relief in internet pornography and almost compulsive masturbation.

The traumatic interactions with early caretakers are replicated in an equally traumatic internalized object relationship, leaving in its wake the true self-waiting to be found. [Modell, 1996, p.86] Safety of the self did not occur for Jeff and he retreats to his interior world as a place of self-

preservation. This is not an uncommon occurrence when the outer world is so lacking in protection, guidance or love. One of the results of the retreat from early grief and mourning, hurt and pain is becoming de-centered and emptied of the spontaneous. Even as a child, Jeff remembered a time when he laughed too much with friends and strictly instituted a rule to himself to never be free like that again because he felt so ashamed. Another result is frantically defending the preservation of private space as the self is experienced as fragile and acutely vulnerable to the responses of the other. [Modell, 1996, p. 78] This is the very scenario replaying itself in the analytic transference and where Jeff becomes confused, does not know how to respond and overloaded with how to be.

Jeff describes a vacuum at the center of his being, feelings of loneliness and solitude—a sense of smallness in the presence of the other. The failure in the parent holding environment and the loss of contact with an authentic self can result in a closing off from others. Like Jeff, one is estranged from the affective core, life seems meaningless, empty and futile and there is unaccountable self-loathing. To find meaning is to be attached to life, otherwise the self feels empty and dead, as if nothing was there. Yet, he insists there is a place for contemplating meaninglessness and making room for the dark side in all encounters.

Put another way, Julia Kristeva says that when instinct turns self-destructive, the ego, from early in life, lacks cohesion and falls into bits. [1994, p. 19] The anxiety and feeling of being destroyed from within is what remains. Jeff does not recognize the splitting or parceling of the self as it occurs so automatically and has been happening for as long as he can remember. His self-doubt and despair can become excruciating and make life feel brutalizing. From the trauma of early neglect affective meaning is not only experienced as lacking but also splits off into numbness or physical symptoms. For example, Jeff is often confused and does not know what he should do when he has free time—read, exercise, have a coffee or work on his home. Again, this is the enactment of what Jeff calls the blown apart place.

Jeff recognizes those who have the same blown apart place and, if women, he is drawn to them sexually. He might have sex but does not stay the night as this is too intimate. He insists I do not have this place and am better constituted than he but equally that I will never understand. This is also why he feels nothing close in the analysis and there is no physical feeling except discomfort.

Jeff says it is painful to experience the annihilation inherent in the blown apart place and he feels more alone as he often does not have words

for it. The paradox is that analysis dwells in sharing these innermost ravages and the idea is that reflecting on them leads to therapeutic movement. Because we often resist change, it is the job of therapy to provide another perspective, a loosening from the old fixed positions.

Jeff dreamt that a woman named Susan who he dated as a freshman in college said he was heavier. He thought it was because he was in his medical scrubs. The dream took place at the hospital where he works. Susan said she had strong abs and he said he had strong calves. His associations are that the heavier refers to literal weight and reminds him how badly he feels about his body. This is a difficult area for him and there is no attaining correct weight because it is really a situation referring to physical inner ballast. Something is always off internally. He also recalls the woman in the dream saying years ago that he was not compassionate to himself. She was strong in the abdominals, a core part that he could develop. This feminine figure with my name reminds him about the need for compassion in general, both towards his self and others. As I remark on the far-reaching effect of his emotional neglect, he becomes quite sad and reminds him of his lack of self-compassion. He did not associate that the woman with my name could refer to me nor the issue of compassion in our relationship, showing how he is removed from such feelings or attachments. The natural impulse for

connection has remained in the unconscious and tended to turn against and develop anti-human qualities, referring to his harshly self-critical nature. In a compensatory move, the dream calls for compassion.

The analytical relationship can offer a corrective experience, a kind of repair that involves remembering the wrenching and broken connections. Therapy is a search for an additional story and takes time to evolve. "The situation becomes difficult, however, when the patient's nature resists a collective solution. The question then arises whether the therapist is prepared to risk having his convictions dashed and shattered against the truth of the patient. If he wants to go on treating the patient he must abandon all preconceived notions and, for better or worse, go with him in search of the religious and philosophical ideas that best correspond to the patient's emotional states." [Jung. 1966, par. 184]

Jeff became an avid reader of Frederick Nietzsche's books, not Jung, and the questions about what it is to be alive from Nietzsche's perspective fit into shaping his sense of self. He was not raised with a narrative about his individual life or a sense of its meaning. Rather, he was born into a collective narrative arising from his religious community, family and parental expectations.

The experience of failure in the containing function is another way of

naming what Jeff calls his blown apart place. Bion describes this as characterized by minute splitting; an experience of fragmentation of mind and objects; a feeling of being trapped; a sense of nameless dread; a sense of disintegration;; the inability to bear absence (while experiencing links as being filled with cruelty); being bombarded with sensations and not having time to compose thoughts or reactions; intolerance of suffering; manic searches for a container which Jeff calls needing someone to make him whole. [Stevens, 2005, p. 622-] In the analysis Jeff sometimes says my comments cause him lose his own thoughts and feelings and veer off. He becomes internally bombarded by many ways to answer and then confused about how to respond. This is also evidence of the blown apart place that can paralyze his mind. He gets caught in what he thinks is expected and this separates him from what he actually thinks and feels as well as from connecting with an other.

Andre Green [1997, p. 146] names this situation blank mourning and aligns it to emptiness. A person survives early emotional neglect and grief but may not be able to handle the vast emptiness that progressively and through life translates into a life numbness. Green notes, “The mother’s blank mourning induces blank mourning in the infant burying part of his ego in the maternal necropolis.” [1997, p.9] Sooner or later despair sets in. The

longing for the mother who has left and does not return emotionally or physically does not diminish, but the hope of its being realized fades and the child withdraws.

Bion puts this another way in describing the mother, who in a state of reverie, is capable of with-standing the infant's terror and nameless dread of annihilation in the face of her absence: physical, emotional, or cognitive. [Stevens, 2005, p. 616} In addition, the sufficiently containing mother is able to take in and reflect expressions of joy and pleasure. This synchrony of both negative and positive affective states, together with the mother's ability to hold them and not be overwhelmed by them, gradually allows the infant to be able to hold and tolerate such states of mind. We also see this occurring in the analytic process and the conundrum when the instincts, like in the case of Jeff, have no natural expression, having been shut off so early in life.

This is a part of the tears Jeff sheds—that at first embarrassed him but as they flow he can do nothing but let them be. We rarely comment on them as it seems that his psyche and body just needed to weep--maybe for the lack of what he called resonance and the unrequited longing, maybe for other emotions of neglect and lack that propelled the search for his self.

Jung contended that what passed for normality often was the very force

that shattered the personality of the patient. Trying to be normal like following the collective religion or the family, for Jeff, violated his inner nature and was itself a form of pathology. For Jeff being in nature brings increasing trust in his path that, for him, feels outside the norm as he used to perceive it. This is not an experience he easily puts into words, nor that he really knew until he began taking solo hikes, bike rides and backpacking trips. There is a felt expansion in his increased sense of self each time he takes a nature trek.

Jung says, “I prefer to designate the creative impulse as a psychic factor similar in nature to instinct, having indeed a very close connection with the instincts, but without being identical with any one of them. . . . it has much in common with the drive to activity and the reflective instinct. But it can also suppress them, or make them serve it to the point of the self-destruction of the individual. Creation is as much destruction as construction. [Jung, 1989, par. 245.]

One of the valuable legacies we have from Jung is an image of life that is organic. “Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible . . . the part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer . . . Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures.” In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung describes his

early experiences: “Nature seemed to me full of wonders, and I wanted to steep myself in them. Every stone, every plant, every single thing seemed alive and indescribably marvelous. I immersed myself in nature, crawled, as it were, into the very essence of nature.” “No man lives within his own psychic sphere like a snail in its shell, separated from everybody else, but is connected with his unconscious humanity.”

Establishing a living bridge between the primal and the modern may be one of the essential tasks of our era. From the suffering and the struggle one achieves individuality and identity forms out of the broken chain of circumstances. Transcending the tragedies, one finds a capacity to live authentically. By being able to tolerate the frustration of not-knowing, and able to face emptiness without trying to fill it or idealizing it as a way of denying feeling, dependence, or desire, we experience a process of being and interaction. A question remains if Jeff’s life will evolve from the emotional black hole and fragmentation or create a space for growth, curiosity, play, and creativity. [Stevens, 2005, p. 609] In other words, our experiences can be annihilating or with inner work they can become transformative.

The wild dogs appearing at the end of the day, scurrying around, making motions to deflect danger or attention were showing their instinctual

reaction for protecting their babies and their community. And, they were providing a sufficient container.

Through our analytic discussions it became apparent that this protection of the parents, their care of the babies is what Jeff missed from the beginning of life. It also became apparent that Jeff was not a community or collectively oriented person. Gradually and slowly as we bridged the realms of the physical body and the psyche, Jeff gained liberation from automatism and replaced it with increased sensitivity to himself.

He became more an individual and more comfortable with what he assumed was not fitting in. Is it possible that intimacy of relationship was not for him? That his life was more solitary and that accepting this situation was part of Jeff's authentic process of individuation?

Jung said, "In this world created by the Self we meet all those many to whom we belong, whose hearts we touch; here "there is no distance, but immediate presence." (Jung, Letter, Vol. 1, p, 298) More than we realize affects the analytic experience, like the event in the South African bush, outside Western time and space. Likewise, the analysis with Jeff in many ways was outside of linear time and became a place where differences became the ways into the psyche. We find ourselves relying on the unknown, the basics, the elemental, the complex and the symbolic as the

story of life unfolds. The capacity for growth, development, creative agency, and love is dependent upon an experience of existing in the mind, eyes, and gaze of an-other in a dance of attuned, rhythmic and imperfect resonance. And this may be a way of describing what is inherent to the analytic process.

“that to approach the stranger

is to invite the unexpected, release a new force

O let the genie out of the bottle,

It is to start a train of events...”

The Cocktail Party by T.S. Eliot

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